



KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

NEWS RELEASE

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KENTUCKY BOARD OF EDUCATION AGREES TO STUDY PUBLIC CHARTERS

(FRANKFORT, Ky.) – During its meeting in Frankfort today, the Kentucky Board of Education agreed to study the concept of public charter schools in Kentucky. Currently 43 states have legislation that allows charter schools. Kentucky does not.

“I think we need to look at all of the options for school improvement,” Commissioner of Education Stephen Pruitt said. “I’ve seen charters done well and not so well, so I don’t think that they are necessarily a silver bullet that will solve all of our problems with the achievement gap. However, we do need to consider a variety of tools in our utility belt for closing the opportunity and achievement gaps as well as the continuous improvement of all of our schools.”

The board agreed to study public charter schools during a special meeting in November with the date to be announced.

Also at its meeting, the board heard a report on the 2016 Unbridled Learning Accountability System. Statewide, student achievement is up at almost all grade levels with notable improvement in middle school mathematics. Graduation and college/career-readiness rates also improved statewide.

The Kentucky Department of Education’s strategy for reducing the number of students scoring novice, the lowest performance level, showed promise with schools/districts in the novice reduction pilot recording a lower percentage of novice learners than those not in the pilot. The state recorded 3,000 fewer novice learners in the 2015-16 school year than the year before.

During an update on districts in state assistance, the board learned that Fleming County improved to a distinguished school district and Robertson Co. improved to a distinguished/progressing school district according to the latest accountability results.

As for state-managed districts, Breathitt Co. celebrated its first school of distinction and the fact that ACT scores increased by nearly two points at the high school. In Menifee County, the high school improved to be a proficient/progressing school.

The financial situation in each of the state-assisted and state-managed districts including Caverna Independent, which is under state assistance, also has improved. Leadership for all of the districts said the financial and academic

(more)

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improvement they have seen would not have been possible without assistance from staff at the Kentucky Department of Education.

Also during Wednesday's meeting, the board approved:

- a Program Review Audit Process for the 2016-17 school year. The proposed changes include increasing the number of schools to be audited, providing a more concise audit team report to schools, focusing the school report on best next steps for program improvement, adding a phone/skype meeting with the school leadership prior to the site visit and eliminating site visits for the K-3 Program Review. Decisions regarding Program Reviews beyond the current school year will be part of the discussion related to the design of the new accountability system that is currently underway to satisfy the requirements of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- amendments to the Kentucky Tech Policies and Procedures
- 2016-17 Local District Tax Rates Levied
- district facility plans for Johnson County and Owen County
- the appointment of Susan Norton from Rockcastle County Public Schools to the Kentucky Writing Program Advisory Committee
- a waiver from 702 KAR 4:050, Section 4(4)(a), Requirement that the Hopkins County Board of Education Acquire Mineral Rights Forbearance Prior to Purchasing a Property in Madisonville, Kentucky

In other business, the board shared with Commissioner Stephen Pruitt the results of a discussion from Tuesday's work session on his self-evaluation. The board cited multiple strengths in three main areas:

- relationships: outreach to various audiences and groups; accessibility; and active listening
- communication: consistency of message; collaboration inside and outside of the agency; and establishment of the annual state of education address
- leadership: willingness to challenge authority if an idea is not in the best interest of students, educators or citizens of Kentucky; ability to make tough decisions; and management through a time of transition

Areas of growth and potential performance goals include:

- relationships: strengthen connection with higher education and early childhood; increase visits to schools and districts
- communication: increase use of social media; pare down the amount of content in weekly emails or target emails to address certain audiences
- leadership: develop and implement a new accountability system under ESSA; develop and implement a strategic plan; continue improvements at the Kentucky School for the Blind and Kentucky School for the Deaf; and embrace innovation as a key strategy

The board will formalize the commissioner's evaluation by approving it in written form and discuss goals for the upcoming year at its December meeting.

Also during Tuesday's work session, the board adopted a new vision statement: "Each and every student empowered and equipped with the knowledge, skills and dispositions to pursue a successful future."

All the meeting materials are available on the board's public portal:

<http://portal.ksba.org/public/Agency.aspx?PublicAgencyID=4388&AgencyTypeID=1>.

The next regularly scheduled Kentucky Board of Education meeting will be December 7 in Frankfort.

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